

**Camden Middle Technology School**  
**4-24-06 to 4-28-06**

**Introduction**

The New Jersey Department of Education conducted a CAPA (Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement) review of Camden Middle Technology School on 4-24 to 4-28-2006. This school is designated as “in need of improvement” for three consecutive years as defined in the *NJ Accountability Workbook. No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) §1117: School Support and Recognition requires that the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) create and maintain a statewide system of intensive and sustained support for those Title I schools designated as “in need of improvement” for more than two consecutive years. As part of this required support system, the NJDOE developed the CAPA review process, which assigns teams of skillful and experienced individuals to provide schools with practical, applicable, and helpful assistance, increasing the opportunity for all students to meet the state’s Core Curriculum Content Standards.

The CAPA review team activities included:

- A review of the documents collected for the school portfolio and data profile;
- 43 classroom visitation;
- General observations, such as morning and afternoon arrival and dismissal, lunch in the cafeteria, and student restrooms;
- 47 interviews with teachers;
- 7 interviews with building leadership and administrators;
- 3 interviews with district administrators;
- 33 interviews with students;
- 54 interviews with school and student support staff; and
- 6 interviews with parents.

Following the study of documentation, and the conducting of interviews and observations, the team discussed each standard and its indicators. Based on these findings, the team offered its recommendations.

CAPA team members and their affiliation included:

<b>TEAM POSITION</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>
Team Leader	Elizabeth Domigan	Educational Consultant
District Liaison	Michael Daniels	Newark Public Schools
Principal	Richard Kaye	Educational Consultant
Language Arts Literacy Specialist	Keisha Smith-Carrington	NJ Department of Education
Language Arts Literacy Specialist	Anthony Wright	NJ Department of Education
District Language Arts Literacy Specialist	None	
Mathematics Specialist	Renee Howard	Educational Consultant
District Mathematics Specialist	None	
Special Education Specialist	Diana Kelleher	Clifton Public Schools
District Special Education Specialist	None	
Bilingual Education Specialist	Eva Rogozinski	Belleville Public Schools
District Bilingual Education Specialist	None	
Parent/Guardian or Grandparent	Barbara Pugh-Gorham	Educational Consultant
DOE Liaison	Francine Wright	NJ Department of Education

### **School Academic Performance Standards**

The following Academic Performance Standards address curriculum, classroom evaluation/assessment, and instruction.

- Standard 1:** The school implements a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned to state and local standards.
- Standard 2:** Multiple evaluation and assessment strategies are used to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work..
- Standard 3:** The school's instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied, and research-based practices to improve student academic performance.

### **School Learning Environment Standards**

The following Learning Environment Standards address school culture; student, family and community support, professional growth, development and evaluation.

- Standard 4:** The school functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence.
- Standard 5:** The school works with families and community groups to remove barriers to learning in an effort to meet the intellectual, social, career, and developmental needs of students consistent with 6A:10A-3.6 Supports for Parents and Families and NCLB §1118 Parental Involvement.
- Standard 6:** The school provides research-based, results driven professional development opportunities for staff and implements performance evaluation procedures in order to improve teaching and learning.

### **School Efficiency Standards**

The following Efficiency Standards address leadership, school culture and resources and comprehensive and effective planning.

- Standard 7:** School instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, organizational direction, high performance expectations, creating a learning culture, and developing leadership capacity.
- Standard 8:** There is evidence that the school is organized to maximize use of all available resources to support high student and staff performance.
- Standard 9:** School leadership and the SLC or NCLB planning committee communicates a clear purpose, direction and strategies focused on teaching and learning through the development, implementation and evaluation of the following: vision, goals, NCLB school improvement plan and report on instructional priorities for Abbott schools.

### **District Academic Performance Standards**

The following Academic Performance Standards address curriculum, classroom evaluation/assessment, and instruction.

- Standard 1:** The district P-12 curriculum is rigorous and aligned to state standards.
- Standard 2:** The district and school uses multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.
- Standard 3:** The district's instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied, and research-based practices to improve student academic performance.

### **District Learning Environment Standards**

The following Learning Environment Standards address school culture; student, family and community support, professional growth, development and evaluation.

- Standard 4:** The district functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence.
- Standard 5:** The district works with families and community groups to remove barriers to learning in an effort to meet the intellectual, social, career, and developmental needs of students consistent with 6A:10A-3.6 Supports for Parents and Families and NCLB §1118 Parental Involvement.
- Standard 6:** The district provides professional development opportunities based on an evaluation of individual and collective teacher needs.

### **District Efficiency Standards**

The following Efficiency Standards address leadership, school culture and resources and comprehensive and effective planning.

- Standard 7:** District instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, organizational direction, high performance expectations, creating a learning culture, and developing leadership capacity.
- Standard 8:** The district is organized to maximize use of all available resources to support schools in achieving high student and staff performance.
- Standard 9:** District leadership and the SLC or NCLB planning committee communicates a clear purpose, direction and strategies focused on teaching and learning through the development, implementation and evaluation of the following: vision, goals, NCLB district improvement plan and report on instructional priorities for Abbott districts.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

### **LEADERSHIP**

The principal is commended for continuing to bring research- based ideas to the staff and district, for consideration of future implementation after a collaborative analysis of the benefits to be derived, and a joint decision to proceed.

The principal is commended is further commended for her sensitivity to the human need to be valued and respected. One interesting example is the new title of Curriculum Enhancement Specialists for teachers who are not the core academic staff and it is during the time that they deliver their instructional classes that other teachers can have a common planning time.

The administrative staff is commended for working together diligently to keep the focus on learning for students.

### **SCHOOL**

Instructional staff members are commended for the positive academic improvement of the student population in the program area of Language Arts Literacy including achievement of the AMAO benchmark for ELLs.

All staff members are commended for the positive change in school culture that has transformed this school to a safe, orderly, nurturing environment where teachers can teach and students can learn.

The school is commended for its commitment to embracing all learners, specifically the special education Students and English Language Learners, and including them in the total life of the school.

### **DISTRICT**

The district is commended for providing the school with a rich resource of personnel who provide a wide range of program options to a diverse student and parent client population.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Camden Middle Technology School - Newark Public School District**

Visit Date:	April 24 to April 28, 2006	Team Leader: Elizabeth Domigan
Grade Levels:	5-8	Enrollment: 498
LPS/AYP Status:	Abbott Low Performing – AYP Missed in GEPA Mathematics	

The CAPA team members, together with school and district leadership, have identified common themes emerging from the report that would have the greatest impact on student achievement. This summary represents these themes found in findings, next steps and recommendations.

**WHOLE SCHOOL REFORM MODEL STATUS:**

- Whole School Reform model(s) currently under contract: There is no WSR model under contract. The school uses the district model “Reaching for the Brass Ring.”
- If there is no model under contract, state the model previously used and length of time it was use: Previous Model was Co’Nect. School had contract from 1999 through June, 2004.
- Reason model discontinued: The decision to use dissolve the relationship with the model developer was made by the district.
- Name of new model or approved district model: “Reaching for the Brass Ring”
- Description of how decision was made to adopt new model: The district made the decision to adopt the new model

**GENERAL REMARKS**

Team members were impressed with the principal’s knowledge of her school and her clarity about decisions made to focus on improvements in selected areas which may have put other areas temporarily on the “back burner.” She shared quite openly and frankly about challenges with fiscal and personnel fluctuations which impacted on her continuous improvement focus. The struggle for the team was to try and report according to the rubric while very much aware of the realities that impact practice and which are not necessarily visible within the report.

The rubrics, as we understand them, are meant to indicate where in given development al process a school is. But they do not recognize “purposeful” decisions which have an impact on the progressive movement forward on the rubric.

We have described in findings what we “found” while in the school, through visits, document review and interviews. Every member was extremely conscious that there is more to this story than we saw in three days. The achievement of AYP in literacy across all students, including sub-populations cannot be minimized although the path to this achievement may not be captured by the “findings” as reported against the indicators on the rubric.

We ask only that the administrators and staff read and review what we offer as outsiders, albeit committed educational outsiders, and reflect on what we offer as “critical friends” to the school.

We struggled to be faithful to our process and to present our view objectively so that the school staff would have this different perspective on their school. It was a worthwhile challenge for us to present this view, it will be part of the schools’ on-going challenge to use what we present to thoughtfully consider how to use this outside perspective to continue to move their school forward.

**FINDINGS: Academic Performance - Language Arts Literacy**

It is evident that there have been strong efforts to strengthen the language arts literacy program. Similarly, it is apparent that there have been and continues to be challenges in moving all staff to fully balanced literacy classrooms.

**FINDINGS: Academic Performance - Mathematics**

While the focus on the new math series is to develop a conceptual understanding of math and there is an awareness on the part of teachers to move in this direction, there is need to assist teachers to make the change from the focus on the acquisition of specific skills which teachers feel pupils are lacking to a focus on eliciting higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills and on helping pupils construct their own understanding of key mathematical ideas.

**FINDINGS: Learning Environment**

The areas under this subtitle address the supports of climate and discipline, parent involvement and professional development. The building is clean and there is considerable outreach to parents that do not always yield the results that the school wants for parental involvement. Using a highly structured approach the building has become a safe and orderly environment in which to teach and learn, however, opportunities for students to develop, practice and internalize independent responsible behaviors are limited. There is a support for teachers through a variety of professional development components and professional development is linked to school goals and student outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to reflect upon the impact of their instruction on the success of their students.

**FINDINGS: Efficiency and Leadership**

The school gathers, analyzes and uses data and is aware of the need to continue to learn from the data so that instruction can be adjusted to the needs of students. Outside consultants provide considerable expertise to the school; teachers are encouraged to share what works. Vice-principals are very involved in student management and administrative activities and there has been an increased commitment to find the time needed to provide even more focus on instructional support.

The school has embraced the concept of instructional teams even while there remains a need to continue to sustain members and develop new members. Student achievement in language arts literacy is significant. However, similar strategies and processes should be applied to other subject areas to promote progress.

The district and school have clear articulated vision and mission statements that are performance based and tied to the goals and objectives of the Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities. It emphasizes the importance of learning processes. To some extent, the school Leadership Council (SLC) collects and analyzes various data, and meets to discuss strategies to expand the school's overall performance to influence student achievement. Currently, there is limited time in the master schedule to support opportunities for all instructional staff to meet *weekly* as instructional units, e.g. literacy or math teachers in grades 5-8 or Curriculum Enhancement teachers with content classroom teachers. Although general educators and special educators regularly participate in grade level content meetings, special staff members meet together and with district staff during certain professional development days.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: Academic Performance**

### **Language Arts Literacy**

School leadership should continue the work with consultants, district administration, and embedded professional development providers to develop plans to increase staff proficiency with research-based strategies and techniques. The resulting growth, specific to development opportunities, should be the focus of informal and formal observations. Teacher ability to differentiate instruction needs to be strengthened in all classrooms so that moving all students toward even higher levels of literacy development continues to be the goal.

### **Mathematics**

In order to continue to help the students of Camden Middle School develop the level of math proficiency they will require to be productive citizens during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the following recommendations are made:

1. The school should continue to (a) systematically focus the scope and sequence of school-based curriculum articulation and monitoring activities; (b) review conditions that regularly impact mathematics instructional time; (c) provide classroom-based professional development designed to increase content knowledge and knowledge of how children learn mathematics (especially key mathematical ideas) as well as how these can be applied in the process of infusing best practices for standards-based, balanced math instructional delivery; and (d) develop and utilize math program/curriculum differentiated instructional strategies to meet group and individual needs;
2. The district should refine and expand technical assistance and ongoing professional development for Camden Middle School's administrative and instructional staff by focusing on content knowledge, knowledge of how children learn both conceptual and procedural mathematics, and the infusion of best practices of math-targeted differentiated instruction.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: Learning Environment**

The school should continue to make outreach to parents and to continue to investigate ways to engage parents more fully. The school should continue to deepen professional development for all staff across all priority areas in the Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities and to provide time and expectation for teachers to reflect upon practice and to use this reflection as part of their on-going growth process.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: Efficiency and Leadership**

Instructional leadership of the administrative team, based upon a collaborative, coaching model, embedded in classrooms that are focused on the improved delivery of research based best practices of differentiated instruction should be increased. Professional development opportunities and time should continue to be provided for staff members to acquire the skills of being members of an instructional team. Interdisciplinary planning should be integrated into the regular operation of the school. Staff members should continue to develop opportunities for students to acquire and demonstrate appropriate behaviors and roles as responsible young adult leaders within the school community. The school should continue planning for all the other goals identified in the Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities Plan.



## **STANDARD 1 - CURRICULUM**

**The school implements a curriculum that is rigorous, intentional, and aligned to state and local standards.**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Review of the staff assignment, classroom schedule, sample Professional Improvement Plan (PIP), sample evaluation, local K-5 curriculum, curriculum implementation, classroom assessment, professional development, SLC, grade level meeting, lesson plan, homework policy, student work, PDA, No Child Left Behind mandated language assessment, and district disaggregated data documents
- Interviews with general education, special education, ESL and bilingual teachers, administrators, Bilingual/ESL/ Supervisor, guidance personnel and Limited English Proficient (LEP) and general education students
- Observations of hallways, classrooms, classroom libraries, and technology use by students and teachers

## **STANDARD 1 INDICATORS**

**1.1 The school conducts regular discussions to ensure that curriculum standards are clearly articulated across all grade levels (P-12).**

### **FINDINGS—LANGUAGE ARTS**

Camden Middle Technology School has identified/conducted meetings with stakeholders in an effort to regularly evaluate and monitor curriculum implementation based upon multiple factors (e.g., local and state standards, student performance on classroom and state assessments, student academic needs as defined by other sources). There is evidence that horizontal and vertical articulation occurs across language arts literacy grade levels in the school. There is evidence that the school discusses vertical articulation with the feeder schools. There is evidence that weekly team meetings involving special education, general education and bilingual and ESL staff occur. Minutes that were reviewed of these meetings did not show a consistent formal structure across all grade levels that focused on methods/strategies used drive the curriculum. Due to a job promotion, teachers at Camden Middle Technology School currently lack the support of an on- site literacy coach to aid in the facilitation and articulation of and direction for the language arts curriculum.

### **FINDINGS--MATHEMATICS**

Although staff state that school-based, math-related meetings are held on a regular basis, it is difficult to ascertain the frequency, scope, and comprehensiveness of the articulation because much of it is not documented through meeting agendas/minutes. The meeting items listed on documentation available for review appear to be predominantly information rather than articulation based. One period of horizontal articulation is scheduled for the school's math teachers each week (i.e., professional development meeting periods). A school administrator and a MRTC (Math Resource Teacher Coordinator) from SLT-V (School Leadership Team-V) are often present. During interviews it was noted that articulation usually focuses on completing SLT-V data analysis reports and on collaborative lesson/unit planning. The formal monitoring of curriculum transition between the building's adjacent grade levels and of transition from the *Everyday Mathematics* program (in grade 5) to *Connected Mathematics* (in grades 6-8) is not a routine focus, but some combined meetings have been held recently for seventh and eighth grade teachers. Vertical articulation with feeder/receiver schools focuses mainly on student placement not on curriculum.

Although special educators are included in weekly horizontal meetings, some staff expressed a desire to meet separately to explore techniques and strategies that will assist them in modifying the general education texts to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities.

**1.2 The school requires all students to take courses with sufficient academic rigor to prepare for post secondary education.**

**FINDINGS—LANGUAGE ARTS**

Camden Middle Technology School (CMTS) includes some opportunities for application of skills, knowledge and processes that will prepare all students to be self-sufficient and productive citizens. CMTS offers a Historical Black College/University (HBCU) Career Day, where guest speakers are invited to talk about opportunities/possibilities beyond CMTS and Newark. The teachers (many of whom are graduates of HBCUs) of CMTS across grade levels actively participate in the HBCU Career Day by decorating their classroom doors in their particular HBCU school colors, and by wearing school paraphernalia during the HBCU Career Day.

The school does provide opportunities for the ELL population. The bilingual class component utilizes the same curriculum for literacy and mathematics that the general education classes have in place and class instruction time should mirror the various reading and writing in general education. In most cases the students in grades 5-8 stay with the general education math teacher with the rest of the general education population, occasionally receiving support through the bilingual teacher depending on their English proficiency level. Yet, there is a lack of training of content area teachers on methodologies and strategies that address the linguistic needs of English Language Learners placed in their classes.

**MATHEMATICS**

The district's math curriculum guides contains some correlations to the NJCCCS cross-content workplace-readiness standards and some teachers note that they may at times informally point out connections between mathematics and post-secondary career options. All of the board-approved textbook series contain problems that require the application of math skills, knowledge, and processes in real-life contexts, but evidence indicates that opportunities for the application of learning are not always authentic in some classrooms. Teachers often walk students through each step of the process rather than prompting them to call upon their prior knowledge and utilize higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.

**1.3 The school leadership works with district supervisors and school faculty to systematically evaluate and adjust the curriculum based on the evidence of student achievement and to ensure that the district curriculum is effectively taught.**

**FINDINGS--LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY**

School leadership empowers school faculty and consultants to evaluate and adjust the school/grade level focus based on the evidence of student achievement. However, procedures to address curriculum issues are not fully implemented. Vertical articulation is becoming part of school practice; its effectiveness is not yet observable. The implementation of looping is an additional challenge as teachers may move to different grade level and curriculum and/or programs from year-to-year.

The school is implementing the district-adopted programs of Harcourt *Trophies* in fifth grade and McDougal Littell in grades six through eight. It should be noted that the special education curriculum is in alignment with the general education curriculum. Some components of the programs are not being implemented in some classrooms. The school curriculum subcommittee exists; however, it is not clear that they are charged with and have been involved in identifying key transition points between fifth and sixth grade curricula. There is ~~some~~ evidence of an attempt to undergo a curriculum mapping process.

Multiple indicators (i.e., program assessments, SPA, ASK4, GEPA, district novel and writing initiatives) are used to evaluate student performance. Teachers receive ongoing professional development to address some identified needs. While vice principals are present during training and are aware of strategies and techniques needed to promote student success, it was not clear from evidence how intense the follow-up is in all classes.

The school leadership has initiated plans to address ESL curriculum issues. There is communication in curriculum matters between the central office bilingual/ESL/Title I supervisor, the school administration and the ESL/bilingual department. The ESL curriculum is skill-oriented, but infused with literacy and content. The district provide curriculum alignment focuses on the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, it is a complete document which is utilized by all middle school ESL teachers in the district. Some teachers don't have the proper knowledge to incorporate the latest educational research in teaching techniques, second language acquisition and reading. Effort has been initiated by the school leadership along with the central office of bilingual education to research teaching and assessment adaptations in other content areas for ELL and special education students and incorporate them into each content area curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

School leadership has procedures in place relative to completing student achievement data reports required by SLT-V, but (as noted in indicator 1.1) much of the math-targeted articulation is informal, undocumented, and horizontal. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade is conducting vertical articulations focused on GEPA skills and assessment. Although the SLC (School Leadership Council) has a curriculum sub-committee, there was little evidence to indicate that they meet regularly to monitor implementation of the math curriculum and its key curriculum transition points. Most math communication and planning are conducted through the SLT-V office.

Instruction in many classrooms visited is heavily teacher-directed and focused on the acquisition of specific skills which teachers feel pupils are lacking rather than on eliciting higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills and on helping pupils construct their own understanding of key mathematical ideas. In many classrooms visited, pupils were often asked to state the answer to a problem and to show the procedural steps they followed, but are not usually asked to communicate the reasoning behind their solution strategies. In many classrooms visited pupils worked as a collection of individuals, even when desks are arranged in groups.

The school's administrators review lessons plans, conduct classroom walk-throughs, and complete formal observations and evaluations. Documentation indicates that feedback is presented, but is usually related to general classroom management and is not math-specific, especially in terms of relating what was observed/reviewed to best practices for standards-based math instruction. The principal allocates resources so that teachers can attend job-embedded professional development activities offered by the district/outside vendors. Plans call for a math consultant to provide on-site

support during the 2006-07 school year, the scope and specificity of these instructional supports is still in the early developmental and/or planning stages.

#### **1.4 The school ensures access to a common academic core for all students including special education and ELL students.**

#### **FINDINGS--LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY**

District-adopted curricula and programs are challenging and elicit higher order thinking and problem solving skills from all students at age- and developmentally-appropriate levels. They are aligned to the NJCCCS. The implementation of these is inconsistent. Classroom visitations reveal whole group and teacher-centered instruction despite the district's balanced literacy focus.

Language arts literacy, offered as an uninterrupted, contiguous block of time, pervades the instructional day and extends into before and after school time (e.g., teacher volunteered/paid time to work with small groups of students). During the school day, opportunities to meet the needs of all struggling students are sometimes absent as all components of programs are not fully implemented in all classes. There are, however, opportunities offered to identified struggling students through Read 180, Wilson Reading and Literacy Tutoring. Curriculum standards are sometimes communicated to and identified for students.

Although each grade level has a general educator and a special educator assigned to work collaboratively throughout the day, in co-teaching classes visited. The dominant instructional model seen during these classroom visits is one in which one teacher instructs while the other observes for a given subject combination (i.e., planning only for science/math or language arts/social studies).

#### **MATHEMATICS**

Both the written curriculum and board-approved textbook series are aligned to the NJCCCS and designed to operate within a balanced math instructional framework, but (as noted in indicator 1.3) the implemented curriculum still has not reached an appropriate "balance" in terms of conceptual and skills-oriented/procedural learning targets. Evidence indicates that challenging activities that elicit higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills are not always delivered and/or offered on a consistent basis to all students. Some suggestions for differentiated instruction can be found in the math textbook series. Lesson objectives were posted in most classrooms, but in those classes visited, they were rarely identified and discussed as part of the lesson's introduction or summary phases-

Although all students receive math instruction on a daily basis, some time inequities exist making it difficult to ascertain if all students receive the mandated minimum of 75 minutes of daily allocated math instruction. Not all pupils receive math instruction in uninterrupted time blocks.-

#### **ELL-LANGUAGE ARTS/MATHEMATICS**

The course offerings for ELLs provide opportunity for these students to access a rigorous curriculum aligned to the NJCCCS in the areas of mathematics and literacy but given the current constraints of personnel not enough time is available to accommodate all the bilingual students for mathematics. Due to the recent 75 percent growth in population of these students, there are already approved plans for an additional staff member to address the needs of these students.

### **STANDARD 1 - NEXT STEPS**

## **MATHEMATICS**

1. With teachers, review ways to regularly conduct brief discussions with their students relative to how posted objectives connect to the NJCCCS as well as to what students are expected to know/be able to do as a result of a given lesson's focus activities and the importance of connecting those objectives. (1.4)
2. In addition to the current items on the walk-thorough, plan book review and formal observation forms, add a space for the use or absence of best practices for standards-based, balanced math instruction. (1.3)

## **STANDARD 1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **LANGUAGE ARTS**

1. Ensure that staff receives continuous scaffolded professional development to further develop their ability to meet individual student needs. Special emphasis should be geared toward appreciation for diversity and the infusion of inclusive practices (i.e., jigsaw activities, other forms of cooperative grouping).
2. Special emphasis in lesson plan procedures and in formal and informal observations should be given to focus on guided reading and student-centered, small group instruction until a teacher reaches effective implementation and then expanding the focus to other components of balanced literacy instruction. (1.2, 1.3, 3.1 and 3.3)
3. School leadership should continue to collaborate with the scheduling consultants to ensure that all students receive an uninterrupted block of LAL instruction and professional development efforts to support this initiative should include the synthesis of instructional materials into a cohesive program for language arts that attend to each student's learning needs. (1.4, 2.3, and 3.3)
4. Revisit the delivery of the collaborative model of inclusion to determine that co-teaching pairs have adequate scheduled planning time and professional development (in dyads). Provide routine feedback on the co-teaching model and continue to explore other inclusion models that address co-teaching pairs teaching styles. This feedback should note the model of collaboration observed (i.e., parallel, station, alternative, or team teaching or one teach one support) and the implementation of balanced literacy. This feedback should also include the frequency and level of collaboration within the teaching pairs. (1.4) (Please see the special education recommendation for Standard 4.5 for additional comment.)

### **ELL**

1. Provide consistent and increased monitoring of the implementation and strengthening of the best practices that ESL and bilingual teachers have received initial training on. Provide on-going professional development in the areas of differentiated instruction, guided reading, and current research in the area of assessment of English language learners. (1.3 and 1.4)
2. With the addition of new staff, revisit the ESL and bilingual teachers participation at grade level meetings for the most effective and useful matches. (1.1)

### **ELL (year 1)**

3. With the addition of new staff, review the ESL and Bilingual teachers participation at grade level meetings for most effective and useful matches. (1.1)
4. Ensure that the planned training for general education teachers in the areas of best practices in second language acquisition as well as an understanding of what bilingual education is provided and supported. (1.2)

### **MATHEMATICS**

1. Review conditions that regularly impact daily mathematics instructional time and provide appropriate remedies in order to ensure that (a) a minimum of 75 minutes of allocated and actual math instructional time occurs on a daily basis and (b) the number of periods where math instruction occurs in an uninterrupted block of time is increased. (1.4)
2. Continue to systematically focus on the scope and sequence of school-based articulation to ensure that the implemented curriculum--
  - (a) includes an appropriate balance of procedural and conceptual learning targets
  - (b) is aligned to the district's written curriculum, state standards, and identified student needs
  - (d) consistently uses best practices for standards-based, balanced math instruction
  - (a) is monitored on a regular basis both horizontally and vertically within the building and at key transition points with feeder/receiver schools (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4)
3. School-based professional development should be continued to be refined to utilize on-site math instructional expertise to provide classroom-embedded activities to help teachers learn about, experience, and consistently use best practices for standards-based, balanced, math instruction. (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4)

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

1. The district should continue to provide opportunities for the special education staff to meet separately with the district's special education and math RTCs to address how to effectively identify and adopt strategies to help modify the current mathematical texts to successfully meet the needs of students with disabilities. (1.1)

### **DISTRICT**

1. Continue to provide technical assistance and professional development (including, but not limited to workshops, shadowing activities, in-class coaching and modeling) designed to increase the ability of Camden Middle Technology School's teachers and administrators to more effectively (a) monitor curriculum implementation; (b) make needed instructional/curricular adjustments and (b) learn about, experience, and consistently utilize best practices for standards-based, balanced, math instructional delivery. (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4)

## **STANDARD 2 – ASSESSMENT - EVALUATION**

**Multiple evaluation and assessment strategies are used to continuously monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work.**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Review of the staff assignment, classroom schedule, sample Professional Improvement Plan (PIP), sample evaluation, local K-5 curriculum, curriculum implementation, classroom assessments, professional development, SLC, grade level meeting, lesson plan, homework policy, student work, Progressive Data Analyses (PDAs), No Child Left Behind mandated language assessment, and district disaggregated data documents, Review of the district Language Arts Curriculum, ESL Curriculum, Science and Social Studies Curriculum, Two-Year Report on Instructional Priorities, GEPA scores for 2003/2004 and 2004/2005, documentation on staff development opportunities, plan books and student folders.
- Interviews with general education, special education, ESL and bilingual teachers, administrators, Bilingual/ESL/ Supervisor, guidance personnel and Limited English Proficient (LEP) and general education students
- Observations of hallways, classrooms, classroom libraries, and technology use by students and teachers

## **STANDARD 2 INDICATORS**

**2.1 The school leadership and faculty ensure that multiple assessments are frequent, rigorous, authentic, aligned with NJCCCS, used to gauge student learning, and adjust teaching to individual needs.**

### **FINDINGS—LANGUAGE ARTS**

The school leadership provides a common planning time for all grade level teachers which can offer teachers opportunities to jointly gauge students' understanding of concepts and level of comprehension.

Although minutes of meetings and interviews with teachers did not reflect the teacher's use of assessments to modify instruction or to provide an individualized approach for struggling students, it is expected by administrators that teachers meet each week across the grade level to analyze student work, target strengths and weaknesses and then craft their instructional plan to meet the needs of those students.

Indications, based on a review of student work and classroom observations, during this visit, showed that students were provided with limited opportunities for choice in the type and or/form of authentic assessment being used. However, assessments administered to students are provided by the district and its literacy resources. A review of classroom work indicates that some teacher designed assessment tasks may not challenge students to use higher order thinking skills based on their abilities. Currently, there is no literacy coach to meet with staff to review data, gauge student learning, or adjust student performance, however teachers meet with professional literacy consultants and the district RTC to receive professional development. It was not clear how intense was the feedback to students regarding their success as a learner.

### **ELL -LANGUAGE ARTS**

Classroom assessment follows the course of study. ELLS receive language arts instruction in a bilingual setting and Tier 3, 4 and 5 students receive math instruction in general education courses.

The assessment are aligned with the NJCCCs but the variety and depth of the assessments for these students is limited.

In most cases, students do not participate in choosing assessments and building rubrics for rating their work. Grade level meetings are not used to develop authentic forms of assessment or to analyze them collaboratively. The district provides many benchmark assessments and literacy is the focus of the school. Most teachers keep student assessment folders for the duration of the course. Some have collections of papers for each student, mostly from completed tests and classroom activities. Writing folders do exist in the ESL classes following the district model of writing portfolio assessment.

There are testing accommodations used during the administration of the NJASK and GEPA tests, such as the use of dictionaries and time and a half. Some content area teachers are not aware of them and do not have bilingual dictionaries for student use in the classroom. The bilingual students are permitted to take a test with the bilingual teacher, but this then takes away from literacy instruction as well as students not utilizing science time in an appropriate manner. In reference to plan books, general education teachers created weekly plans, yet no modifications for ELLs are listed in the reviewed plans for differentiated instruction. The ESL teacher follows a district curriculum alignment when planning lessons.

## **MATHEMATICS**

School leadership implements procedures relative to the inclusion of assessment notations in lesson plans as well as those needed to ensure administration of district/state assessments and completion of SLT-V monthly/quarterly data reports. Multiple forms of assessments are used and analyzed, but the process, as implemented, has limited ability to inform instruction at the classroom level. Students are provided with limited opportunities to complete authentic assessments, communicate the reasoning behind their solution strategies, and choose the type/form of assessment to be used. Most feedback given to students focuses primarily on product (i.e., a student's ability to arrive at the correct answer/use a correct procedure) not on their ability to use problem-solving skills/strategies and mathematical reasoning to explain the rationale behind their solution strategies.

Lesson plan assessment entries are expected to follow the prescribed assessments noted in the Connected Math Program but those reviewed were generic. While there was little evidence to indicate that teachers intentionally and regularly collaborate to design authentic assessment tasks, they sometimes collaborate to analyze samples of students' work on open-ended tasks. Some work folders were seen in classrooms, but they were not intentionally used as a device to measure growth over time. Commercially prepared GEPA practice materials are also used, especially for eighth graders. Most of the data used for analysis is (a) global (for example, total mid-term exam scores; NJCCCS overall cluster proficiency percentages); (b) summative rather than formative; and (c) not organized to show clear alignment to the grade-level sub-cluster benchmarks in the math NJCCCS. Data analysis reports contain comments relative to student needs and suggested instructional strategies that are generally expressed in global language (for example, "11 out of 20 pupils received passing scores"; "provide more time to practice place value") rather in language targeting specific math concepts/skills/procedures (for example, "80 percent of the pupils demonstrate mastery in identifying equivalent fractions"; "have students create concrete and symbolic representations of a given two-digit number and explain how they are related").



**2.2 Students in each class can articulate the academic expectations and know what is required to be proficient. Academic expectations are clearly communicated, evident in classrooms and observable in student work.**

**FINDINGS—LANGUAGE ARTS**

Students can articulate what they need to know and be able to do in order to be proficient. Students can also describe the characteristics of quality work. The NJ Holistic Scoring Rubric and the NJ Open Ended Scoring Rubric were posted in classrooms. There was evidence of holistic scoring grades on some student writing samples in the portfolios or journals. Students could articulate the use of a rubric or how to improve his/her writing. There was little evidence of student centered, student created rubrics made in collaboration with the classroom teacher. Observations and interviews reveal that students had some opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation.

**MATHEMATICS**

School-based collaboration efforts have not as yet focused on developing rubrics for open-ended questions. The holistic rubric contained in the NJCCCS was posted in some classrooms, but scored student work on open-ended questions was not in view in most classrooms and hallways. Lesson objectives are required to be posted (see indicator 1.4), and teachers are to continue to ask students to articulate what they need to know/be able to do in order to demonstrate proficiency. During visits to classrooms, there were few instances in which students are asked to reflect on their work, and when this was done it was usually related to whether an answer was correct or incorrect—i.e., process and reasoning were not targeted.

**ELL**

ELL students can articulate the academic expectations that the school holds for them. In most classes visited, there is whole group instruction, paper and pencil assessment. In some classes objectives were written on the board, yet it was not evident if students were aware of what they were expected to learn.

**2.3 Disaggregated test scores are used by the district and school to identify curriculum gaps and adjust instructional practice, as needed, for all students and sub-groups.**

**FINDINGS--LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY**

Disaggregated test scores are used by the district and school to identify achievement and curriculum gaps. For example, although the school has noted that students entering some grade levels are struggling readers, and the school does have the McDougal Littell anthology series, which offers a modified version of the regular “Language of Literature” book called “Bridges to Literature.” During *classroom visits*, teachers were not focused on guided reading or literature circles to provide scaffolded instruction. As mentioned earlier, there is a curriculum mapping process underway. Evidence indicates that it has not yet reached the level of curricular and instructional modification to fully address the needs of all students and sub-groups.

The Progressive Data Analysis process mandated by the district demonstrates that ongoing data analysis protocols exist. However, these protocols do not consistently modify instructional practices. Whereas some students have been selected to participate in supplemental programs (i.e., Scholastic *Read 180* or the Wilson Language System) or receive additional tutoring, others are assigned to classroom instruction without specific intervention.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Curriculum analysis activities occur mainly in relation to completing reports mandated by SLT-V utilizing some data disaggregated by sub-groups. The process, as implemented, has limited ability to inform instruction at the classroom level (as noted in indicator 2.1) and the focus is on what students know and do not know rather than on identifying curriculum gaps and adjusting instructional and assessment practices accordingly. There is evidence that student work on open-ended questions has been analyzed, but how this analysis is utilized to identify curricular/instructional areas needing modification/adjustment is not clear.

## **ELL**

The school leadership provides the teachers with test scores, but there is no evidence of follow up on how to implement best practices for achievement in the ELL population. Other scores consist of teacher-made scores, chapter test scores, writing as a product for grades, etc. which are scored by teachers with an answer key and rubrics in writing.

## **STANDARD 2 NEXT STEPS**

### **LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY**

Review administrative practices and daily walk-through protocols to determine how consistently samples of student work such as journals and writing portfolios are reviewed and feedback given to teachers. Adjust procedures in light of this review. (2.1, 2.2)

## **STANDARD 2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **MATHEMATICS**

1. Review teacher practices that provide regular opportunities for students to (a) articulate what they need to know/be able to do to demonstrate math proficiency in terms of a given lesson's activities; (b) reflect on their own performances; (c) receive meaningful feedback targeted to their use of conceptual knowledge, problem-solving skills, and reasoning processes. Provide support that teachers may need to strengthen their practice. (2.2, 2.3)
2. Continue to refine, expand, and formalize assessment activities to ensure that—
  - (a) student growth and needs are measured by an appropriate balance of formative and summative measures along the continuum from traditional paper-and pencil tasks to authentic assessments
  - (b) analytical comments are expressed in language specific enough (especially in terms of math concepts/skills/procedures) to effectively inform instruction at the classroom level
  - (c) instruction is periodically adjusted to address identified group and individual student needs (2.1, 2.2, 2.3)

### **ELL**

1. The school leadership should continue to work ~~more closely~~ with the bilingual/ESL teachers and review and strengthen the implementation of the program for English language learners. (2.1, 2.2, 2.3)

## **DISTRICT**

1. Continue to provide technical assistance and professional development to Camden Middle School's teachers and administrators so that assessment activities reach the level of specificity needed to effectively identify student and curricular needs and put appropriate instructional adjustments into practice. (2.1, 2.2, 2.3)

### **STANDARD 3 - INSTRUCTION**

**The school's instructional program actively engages all students by using effective, varied, and research-based practices to improve student academic performance.**

#### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Classroom visitations Review of Progressive Data Analysis (PDA), district curricula (K-5 and 6-8 Language Arts Literacy [LAL], English as a Second Language [ESL], Science and Social Studies), professional development, Two-Year Report on Instructional Priorities, school leadership team (SLC), grade level meeting, lesson plan, curriculum implementation, student work, principal presentation, teacher schedule, various media center information (brochures, offerings [Safari, Recording for the Blind/Dyslexia (RFBD), Learning through Listening Program], Q3), writing lab, and disaggregated data documents, ESL Curriculum, Science and Social Studies Curriculum
- Interviews with general education, special education, ESL and bilingual teachers, administrators, Bilingual/ESL/ Supervisor, guidance personnel and Limited English Proficient (LEP) and general education students
- Observations of corridors and classrooms

### **STANDARD 3 INDICATORS**

**3.1 There is evidence that effective and varied instructional strategies are used in all classrooms.**

#### **FINDINGS—LANGUAGE ARTS**

There is evidence that effective and varied instructional strategies are used in some classrooms. School leadership has established instructional procedures. However, procedures to ensure their implementation are inconsistent. For instance, there is no evidence of the routine monitoring of the implementation of small group instruction and cooperative groupings in observations and evaluations. Evidence indicates that this is noted in lesson plan reviews.

Some classroom instruction accommodates various learning styles, multiple intelligences, student choice, and brain research. The use of quotes for journal prompts and the infusion of reader response activities in most classrooms require students to engage in higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills. During class visits it was observed that metacognitive strategies were ~~are~~ incorporated into some instruction but sometimes resulted in teachers doing the higher order thinking for students instead of supporting students in their movement through the depths of comprehension.

The district mandates novels selected to intentionally provide opportunities for the infusion of social studies content. Whereas some teachers have received professional development to begin interdisciplinary unit development, it is not clear how they were receiving on-going support for the implementation of this process.

## **ELL**

There was little evidence to support any type of student to student interaction in Bilingual/ESL classes. Most of the instruction was teacher directed. ESL/bilingual teachers seem to demonstrate a variety of instructional strategies that are common in language courses, but do not have an understanding of how to accommodate for multiple intelligences, learning styles, differentiated instruction or cooperative learning. General education teachers stated that partner activities are most often used to facilitate the ELL population in their classrooms.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Some procedures relative to instructional practices have been established by school leadership, but monitoring the use of math-specific differentiated instruction (especially strategies intentionally designed to help students approach and make sense of the key math ideas embedded in problem tasks in alternate/modified/more scaffolded ways) is not fully implemented as yet. For example, teachers are required to use a lesson plan format that includes a section entitled differentiated instruction, but most entries reviewed for this report were very general (example – all material will be discussed verbally and be visually put on the board) and the same general strategies are usually noted for all lessons in all classes on a grade level over a period of a week or longer. Some provisions for varied instructional options can be found in the teacher's manual's of the district's adopted math textbook series, but school-based articulation activities result in data analysis reports that include general, not math-specific suggestions for addressing identified student needs (see indicator 2.1). Although manipulative use was highlighted as a strategy in the school's Instructional Priorities/School Improvement Plan, they were not utilized during many of the classroom visitations nor were they placed near students' work areas for easy access on an as needed basis as problem-solving tools. Teachers state that the lack of "basic skills" that many students demonstrate is a serious concern and feel that most pupils are not prepared to use the *Connected Mathematics* program. In order to help them fill in their "learning gaps," teachers tend to devote much of their instructional time to providing direction instruction focused on the acquisition and practice of specific skills and procedures. As a result, some of the key elements of a standards-based, balanced math instructional delivery system—i.e., conceptual learning targets and eliciting the regular use of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills—are not always intentionally and clearly addressed.

After-school programs are available to help students with homework, math skills, and preparation for the GEPA. In addition, a group of students have been identified to receive three periods of Algebra I instruction each week in addition to the regular 8<sup>th</sup> grade math curriculum.

Special education teachers also express the need for help in identifying and using strategies to help them modify the current mathematical series so that it can be used to help meet the needs of students with special needs and to explore and identify supplemental activities that will give their students the opportunity to review and reinforce key concepts and related skill subsets.

### **3.2 Instructional strategies, materials, software, supplies and learning activities are sufficient and available and aligned with the district, school, and state goals and assessments.**

## **FINDINGS – LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY**

Instructional strategies, supplies, and learning activities are aligned with the district and state goals and assessments. This is also true of the special education curriculum, aligned to that of the general education program. During visits to specific classrooms, evidence does not demonstrate that all school

goals are being addressed. For example, the maintenance and improvement of current levels of state assessment success are a clear school goal. Classroom libraries, which were provided by the district's Office of Language Arts Literacy contain a wide variety of diverse reading material directly aligned to the Balanced Literacy program. These texts also are vertically and horizontally aligned to all content areas be it math, science, history, social studies, etc. Whereas classroom libraries do contain texts that address diversity and are age appropriate, these texts are sometimes not developmentally appropriate and/or do not expand upon the social studies themes developed in the curricula.

As mentioned earlier, the use of teacher-centered whole group instruction for large portions of language arts time in both special and general education classrooms, in some classrooms appeared not to be aligned to the district's balanced literacy focus. However, each literacy teacher is expected to follow the district's Balanced Literacy focus and submit these plans to their grade level administrators. These plans describe the following expectations for instruction:

1. Elicit Prior Knowledge
2. Mini Lesson (Anticipatory Set)
3. Guided Practice ( Modeling/Metacognitive Activities)
4. Independent Practice
5. Peer Evaluation (Conferencing)
6. Review & Reflection (Closure)

The school has increased opportunities for student selected reading to address needs noted by assessment data. To this end, the school has also purchased multiple practice test materials for some grade levels to ensure student preparation for state assessments. The district curricula also infuse various types of reading and writing activities to ready students.

Furthermore, technology is not seamlessly integrated into teaching and learning in all classrooms, despite its availability (e.g., classrooms supplied with an overhead projector, computers, television, Safari system, etc.). The media center is fully stocked but appeared to be underutilized during this visit.

## **ELL**

There was evidence of the ESL/bilingual classes' instructional strategies being in alignment with the school, district goals and assessment as well as on the state level. The school's main focus is literacy, thus most of the in-service available focused on this content area.

There was evidence of materials supplied by the ESL/bilingual department on the district level to the ESL/bilingual teacher. A variety of supplemental reading materials in English and some novels in Spanish were available to the students in both classrooms. Since the bilingual program is aligned with the general education program the teacher has the same texts in English for literacy in reading and grammar texts for the teachers to choose from develop their lesson plans. There was some evidence of high interest leveled reading materials for independent reading or book report. The media center also had some copies of novels available for Spanish speaking students. The media center also had limited reference materials available for research for Spanish speaking students. There was some evidence of high expectations in the student writing samples provided with utilization of the state holistic rubrics for language arts.

There is no evidence of software available to bilingual students to facilitate learning in the classroom. The district office has had difficulty with installation of appropriate software on the school computer server.

There was little evidence to support any type of student to student interaction, most of the instruction was teacher directed. ESL/bilingual teachers seem to demonstrate a variety of instructional strategies that are common in language courses, but do not have an understanding of how to accommodate for multiple intelligences, learning styles, differentiated instruction or cooperative learning. General education teachers stated that partner activities are most often used to facilitate the ELL population in their classrooms.

## **MATHEMATICS**

As noted in standard 2, the degree to which instructional strategies are effectively informed by the existing data analysis activities is limited. Students are given some opportunities to complete tasks similar to those on the GEPA, but they tend to be used to a greater extent in grades 7 and 8. Evidence indicates that the collaborative of work on open-ended tasks is at the beginning stages and did not continue on a regular basis after administration of the GEPA in March. Most classrooms have a sufficient variety of print, manipulative, and calculator resources, but during most observations only print resources were used. Although there are three classroom computers in most classes, evidence indicates that they are not regularly incorporated into math lessons. The media center provides some resources to support the parts of the math curriculum, but they focus on providing practice for skills and procedures and not on eliciting higher-order thinking and problem solving skills.

### **3.3 Instructional strategies and activities are continuously monitored and aligned with individual student needs.**

## **FINDINGS – LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY**

There is evidence that some instructional strategies and activities are monitored across all classes and aligned with individual student needs. However, as stated earlier, differentiated instruction is not consistently addressed for students or staff in general, bilingual/ESL nor special education classes. For instance, lesson plan feedback is primarily in check-off format without specificity related to strategies or techniques teachers should include or expound upon to ensure the diverse needs of the student population are met. Some instructional strategies, activities, and content are engaging and intentionally accommodate various learning styles, brain research, and multiple intelligences.

## **MATHEMATICS**

As noted in standard 1, there is evidence that school leadership monitors math instruction on both a formal and informal basis but the feedback that is provided to teachers is not math-specific and targeted toward ensuring the effective and consistent use best practices for standards-based, balanced math instructional delivery. Although differentiated instruction is noted on all lesson plans, the entries contain basic generic strategies and most plans contain the same strategy listings (see indicator 3.1). Most classroom visitations did not yield evidence to indicate that math-targeted strategies are intentionally employed so that all students have the opportunity to approach, explore, and make sense of the mathematics (especially key conceptual ideas) in alternate/modified/more scaffolded

### **3.4 Teachers demonstrate the content knowledge necessary to challenge and motivate students to high levels of learning.**

#### **FINDINGS – LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY**

Some teachers demonstrate the content knowledge necessary to challenge and motivate students to high levels of learning. The majority of the staff (29 teachers) has five years or less experience. They are highly qualified by NCLB standards. Many teachers participate in voluntary professional development provided by the district. All grade levels have some vertical articulation opportunities. Whereas some evidence indicates that professional practice is updated as a result of these opportunities, it is not clear how intensely this enables teachers to instruct in ways that regularly challenge and motivate students to high levels of learning.

According to the school statistics all teachers observed working with the English language learner population are highly qualified in their discipline. There is evidence of content knowledge, but no evidence to show full demonstration of how to address the high order thinking skills of this LEP population in most of the classes observed.

#### **MATHEMATICS**

As noted in standard 1, there is evidence that school leadership monitors math instruction on both a formal and informal basis but the feedback that is provided to teachers is not math-specific and targeted toward ensuring the effective and consistent use best practices for standards-based, balanced math instructional delivery. Although differentiated instruction is noted on all lesson plans, the entries contain basic generic strategies and most plans contain the same strategy listings (see indicator 3.1). Most classroom visitations did not yield evidence to indicate that math-targeted strategies are intentionally employed so that all students have the opportunity to approach, explore, and make sense of the mathematics (especially key conceptual ideas) in alternate/modified/more scaffolded

### **3.5 There is evidence that teachers incorporate the use of technology in their classrooms.**

#### **FINDINGS—LANGUAGE ARTS**

Technical assistance is readily available to assist teachers in curriculum integration and technology maintenance on an as needed basis provided by a full-time technology coordinator and library media specialist; however, such services are not utilized to the fullest. There is some evidence of the existence and use of technology in the school. While computers exist in the building, there is little evidence of how they are used as an instructional tool that results in improved student achievement. While the classrooms have computers, and are internet accessible, classroom evidence does not reflect that technology is being infused in the instruction. bilingual/ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms do not have software in available. The writing lab was utilized for essay writing, but there is little evidence of how it is used for exploratory or center based learning. There are two computers labs in the building and a minimal amount of computers in varied classrooms for student use.

#### **MATHEMATICS**

Technology existing in the school to support the math program consists mainly of calculators, overhead projectors, computers (some with Internet accessibility), and computer software programs. While evidence indicates that these resources are sometimes used to deliver math instruction, it is clear that utilization has not as yet reached the stage where it is seamlessly integrated into it as both practice and problem-solving tools. Calculators are used more frequently by students than other types of

technology. Although school administration requires teachers to include technology integration on lesson plan entries, there is no clear evidence to show how they monitor the implementation during actual math lessons. The school's library media specialist and technology coordinator are available to provide technical and maintenance assistance for teachers.

### **3.6 Teachers examine and discuss student work collaboratively and use this information to inform their practice.**

#### **FINDINGS—LANGUAGE ARTS**

Teachers meet regularly and collaboratively analyze student work to identify individual student strengths and needs in an effort to make instructional decisions. Most of this analysis is centered on student writing samples that are discussed during staff development meetings held with the literary consultant. There is some data to document specific training, and analysis of student work. Based on observations to specific classrooms, it is not clear how well this translates to curricular modifications and informed instructional practices. Teachers do review the work of their own students. Classroom visitations, interviews, and a review of student work on display in classrooms, indicate the use of rubrics. Also, NJ Registered Holistic Scoring was evident in student portfolios, journals, or student work displayed on bulletin boards.

#### **ELL**

Teachers in all grade levels have weekly meeting time to collaborate and discuss student work. The ESL/bilingual teachers did not receive training in portfolio assessment and neither did the general education teachers on alternative assessment to drive instruction of English language learners. All teachers are required to keep marking period folders of all assessments. The analysis is not always used to guide further instruction.

#### **MATHEMATICS**

Evidence indicates that the school's math teachers are in the beginning stages of meeting regularly and collaboratively for the purpose of reviewing and discussing student work with most of the activities occurring in grade 8. The district is also in the beginning stages of training math teachers in the use of protocols for analyzing student work. To date, much of the analysis that has been generated focuses on identifying student needs rather than on identifying instructional/curricular areas needing modification/adjustment.

### **3.7 There is evidence that homework is frequent and monitored and tied to instructional practice.**

#### **FINDINGS—LANGUAGE ARTS**

There is a district homework policy. Teachers assign homework as an extension of classroom instruction. Students can articulate the relationship between homework and the relationship between class work and homework assigned. Teachers and students indicate that homework is checked regularly. Homework in some classes is frequent; most plan books referred to class activities and their related homework activities.



## **MATHEMATICS**

School leadership implements procedures to ensure that the district's homework policy is followed and regularly checks to see that homework entries are included in plan books. Homework assignments are usually posted for student reference and are most frequently designed to help pupils practice specific skills and/or procedures. Some assignments connect to real world experiences and/or extend learning. Students can sometimes articulate the purpose of homework and the relationship between class work, homework, and the lesson's objective(s). Instructional follow-up and/or feedback usually is given to the entire class at the same time and it focuses on the product (i.e., the correctness of the answer and accuracy of the procedural steps employed to get the answer) and not on process (i.e., the pupil's ability to reason mathematically and use problem-solving skills to explain the rationale behind their solution strategies).

### **STANDARD 3 NEXT STEPS**

#### **LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY**

1. Review with teachers the expectations of how technology should be infused in their lesson plans. (3.2, 3.4, and 3.5)

#### **MATHEMATICS**

2. Review with teachers the expectation that, during homework review, specific feedback should be given to individual students relative to how well they were able use higher-order thinking, mathematical reasoning, and process skills to explain why a solution strategy they used made sense of the math concepts/skills/procedures embedded in a given problem-based task. (3.7)

### **STANDARD 3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY**

1. The NJCCCS recognize the importance of technology in the classroom as a means "to gather, analyze, and communicate information, in a thorough and efficient manner". To this end, teachers should receive further training in integrating technology into instruction. (3.4 and 3.5)
2. Teachers should provide modifications for ELLs in their lesson plans and provide student with alternative assessment in the content areas where the ELLs are present. (3.1)

#### **MATHEMATICS**

1. In order to actively engage all students and meet their group and individual needs, teachers should, through Connected math and Everyday Math, intentionally and regularly (a) use resources (including, but not limited to technology and manipulatives) and strategies that address various learning styles, multiple intelligences, brain research (b) help students explore and make sense of the mathematical concepts, skills, and procedures embedded in problem tasks in alternate/modified/more scaffolded ways. (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 3.6)
2. Develop a school-based, math-targeted professional development plan that provides on-site expertise to help teachers and administrators (a) gain a better understanding of current research regarding how children learn math, especially how they construct key conceptual ideas and (b)

infuse math-targeted differentiated instructional strategies. The plan should also incorporate the regular use of mentoring, in-class coaching, and articulation activities. (3.1, 3.3, 3.4)

3. Through district and outside consultants continue the development of a school-based, math-targeted professional development plan that provides on-site expertise to help teachers and administrators (a) gain a better understanding of current research regarding how children learn math, especially how they construct key conceptual ideas and (b) infuse math-targeted differentiated instructional strategies. This on-going plan should continue to incorporate the regular use of mentoring, in-class coaching, and articulation activities. (3.1, 3.3, 3.4)

## **ELL**

1. ESL and bilingual teachers are in need of training and monitoring in the use of technology in their classrooms. (e.g. through the use of appropriate software, such as web quests) (3.2)
2. Continue to provide up-dated technology training , specifically, awareness and use of appropriate software, to ESL and bilingual teachers. Provide monitoring and support for the implementation of this technology use in their classrooms. (3.2)

## **DISTRICT**

1. Continue and refine professional development and technical support for both teachers and the building administrators relative to (a) deepening their math content knowledge; (b) gaining a better understanding of current research regarding how children learn math; (c) infusing math-targeted differentiated instructional strategies; and (d) intentionally and regularly incorporating manipulatives and technology as part of classroom instructional delivery. (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7)

## **STANDARD 4 – SCHOOL CULTURE**

**The school functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence.**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Administrator, teacher and non-instructional staff, student interviews
- Review of School Safety & Evacuation Plan, Discipline Policy, Student and parent handbook
- Classroom outdoor, cafeteria, visitations,

## **STANDARD 4 – SCHOOL INDICATORS**

**4.1 The principal and school leadership are responsible for and supports a safe, clean, hospitable, orderly, and equitable learning environment.**

### **FINDINGS:**

The overall climate of the building generally reflects order and structures are in place to encourage safety and order. Most of the individuals interviewed state they feel safe in the school. A referral system has been established for students experiencing behavioral issues. A Suspension On Site (SOS) classroom is designed to house 20-25 students experiencing behavioral issues during the school day. The school has adopted classroom management and district discipline policies to provide a safe,

healthy, and equitable learning environment. There is little evidence that learning environment data, via surveys or other means, are regularly collected for use in planning and decision-making. The hallways are equipped with an electronic surveillance system which monitors hallways, stairwells, and entrances which have either proven to be or could potentially be trouble spots for unwelcome activity. The monitor is located in the lobby where various parts of the building can simultaneously be monitored throughout the course of the day by security.

**4.2 School leadership, teachers, and staff members hold high expectations for all students academically and behaviorally and inspire their best efforts as evidenced in their interactions, attitudes and instructional practice.**

**FINDINGS:**

School leadership expressed a commitment to high academic expectations for all students. The mission statement affirms this belief. Students state that teachers have high expectations because they are often tested and receive homework nightly. There is a student code of conduct that was developed and communicated to all students and some staff members express a belief that is not equitably applied to all students. The learning environment of the school is generally nurturing. An advisor/advisee program is in place for all seventh grade students with consideration for expansion in September 2006. Student achievement is celebrated in many ways through assemblies, student of the month, honor rolls, awards, and certificates. In the recent past student management/behavioral concerns were a major issue. Using a highly structured approach the building has become a safe and orderly environment in which to teach and learn.

**4.3 School leadership and teachers accept responsibility for student success/failure.**

**FINDINGS:**

The school leadership and teachers are aware of and acknowledge the link between teacher efficacy and student performance. As required in the research based backwards design lesson format, teachers reflect upon the impact of their instruction on the success of their students. Teachers are beginning to work, in literacy, to provide students with opportunities to evaluate the instructional performance of the teachers and use the feedback to improve their classroom practice as needed.

**4.4 Student achievement is highly valued and publicly celebrated (for example, displays of exemplary student work, assemblies).**

**FINDINGS:**

Student work is displayed in all hallways and classrooms, and is shared with parents during parent/teacher conferences. Interviews revealed that assembly programs are held to recognize student achievements.. Student accomplishments are regularly recognized through incentives, exhibition of student work, special honor roll and attendance assemblies. Student work is display in classrooms and corridors emphasizing concentration upon literacy. Students are familiar with the rubrics that guide to high achievement. Student academic achievement is shared publicly with all stakeholders.

**4.5 The school matches teacher strengths and experience with the needs of students. The school intentionally assigns staff to maximize opportunities for all students to have access to the staff's instructional strengths.**

**FINDINGS:**

Student groupings are based on instructional needs e.g. ESL, special education. General education students are grouped based on instructional needs, student performance, parent and teacher recommendation teachers are assigned based upon their content strength(s) and teacher requests and the needs of the building. Teachers who have stronger inclinations toward certain content areas are assigned accordingly. The student/teacher ratio is 1 to 8. There is evidence that the building schedule allows teaching assignments to be adjusted in order to maximize the impact of the strengths of specific teachers on student learning.

There is currently one bilingual teacher who is responsible for literacy in grades 5-8, as well as pull-out for math in the upper grades depending upon the English language proficiency needs of the students. Upon speaking to the district personnel another bilingual teacher is in the plan for the next academic year, with focus on bilingual mathematics in all grades levels.

Currently, there are eight self-contained classes, four full inclusion classes, and two pull-out replacement classes. Co-teachers involved in the in-class support model, during class visitations, did not exercise a sense of co-ownership as it relates to the planning and delivery of instruction. Although each grade level has a general educator and a special educator assigned to work collaboratively throughout the day, classroom parity was not observed. The common practice observed during this visit involved predominant ownership of individual subject areas by each teacher. Opportunities for small group instruction and differentiated instructions are not realized and utilized.

**STANDARD 4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Reaffirm school student management policy/procedures with periodic sessions so that appropriate consistency supports the schools beliefs. (4.2)

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

1. Professional development should continue to be conducted on best inclusive practices and co-teaching approaches and differentiated instruction. The practices begun with the inclusion grant should continue to involve both general educators and special educators. (4.5)
2. It is recommended that appropriate building-based and district personnel continue to meet to explore the possibility of expanding current program options in an effort to promote greater LRE (Least Restrictive Environment) and inclusion opportunities. Explore the feasibility of abolishing selected self-contained classes and creating additional pull-out replacement and in-class support program options. (4.5)

**ELL**

1. The school leadership should provide training for general education teachers in the areas of instruction and assessment of English language learners to foster an understanding of making content comprehensible for this student population. (4.3)

2. The school leadership should ensure that the appropriate *SIOP* training for general education teachers in the areas of instruction and assessment of English language learners to foster an understanding and making content comprehensible for this student population is provided and supported. (4.3)

## **DISTRICT**

See Recommendations #2 -Special Education. Provide guidance to CST to look at T&L assessments as they determine IEPs for students.

## **STANDARD 5 - STUDENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

**The school works with families and community groups to remove barriers to learning in an effort to meet the intellectual, social, career, and developmental needs of students consistent with 6A:10A-3.6 Supports for Parents and Families and NCLB §1118 Parental Involvement.**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Administrator, teacher, parents, students and non-instructional staff interviews
- Review of Student/Parent Compact, Perception Survey, SLC minutes, Parent center programs, Before/After school programs
- Classroom, outdoor visitations

## **STANDARD 5 INDICATORS**

**5.1 Families and the community are treated as partners with the school and district with frequent communication via take-home notes (in appropriate languages), e-mail and phone calls when necessary.**

### **FINDINGS:**

The district has implemented many policies and there is a school opening day package that reflects these policies (e.g. parent, discipline, attendance, and tardiness policies). There are very few parents involved in the school even though many efforts have been made to reach out to and involve parents. There is a parent liaison who is actively seeking parental involvement through the PTA (Parent Teacher Association), EPIC (Every Person Influence a Child), and workshops, etc. There are three parents and one student on the SLC (School Leadership Council). The SLC has a sub committee to increase parental involvement. Very few parents volunteer on a regular basis. Parental involvement is not evident in the educational process. Most documents reviewed were in two languages, English and Spanish. Most communications between parents and teachers revolves around behavior and academic challenges. The student support members (social worker, nurse, guidance counselors, disciplinarians, etc) provide services for all students. There is collaboration among school staff members, families and community members during parent/teacher conferences. The school has adopted many ways that the school uses to communicate with parents, e.g. e-board, phone calls, flyers, email, teacher web pages, warning notices, progress reports, newsletters.

**5.2 The school ensures that ALL students, including special education students and English language learners are taught what they are expected to learn and are provided with additional instructional programs and services in and beyond the classroom based on documented need.**

## **FINDINGS:**

The school offers the After School Youth Development Program (ASYDP - Supplemental Educations Services) and the criteria for enrollment are data driven. There are 105 students enrolled. This program focuses on academics and recreation. GEPA Academy targets 8<sup>th</sup> graders and currently has a population of 60 students enrolled. This program services both general education and special education students. The 21st century program has 60-70 students enrolled and is an enrichment program that deals with academic and recreational skills. It also services general education and special education students. The school counselors collaborate with staff members and families to implement programs to support students needs (e.g. social, intellectual, developmental needs). They give seminars in Bullying, Anger Management and Self Esteem, etc. The counselor sees all of the students at least once a year.

Staff, students, and parents state that computers are available in all classes.

### **5.3 Students who are falling behind receive necessary additional assistance to support their learning in and beyond the classroom.**

## **FINDINGS:**

Classroom teachers are involved with the after school programs to meet student needs to close gaps for student achievement across subpopulations. The school and community collaborate to provide all students with opportunities for service learning. The school leadership has partnerships with NJIT (New Jersey Institute of Technology), UMDNJ (University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey), New Jersey Police Department, etc. The school offers different activities to all students (e.g. Girls and Boys Basketball, Peer Mentoring Big Brother/Sister, Best Friends (for Girls), Safety Patrol, Chorus).

The established PRC infrastructure addresses the academic, social, and/or emotional concerns of individual students, who have been identified as being in need of interventions and strategies to address one or more of the aforementioned areas.

## **STANDARD 5 NEXT STEP**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

1. Continue to address and generate awareness among all stakeholders that the PRC process has been designed to address the academic, social, and/or emotional concerns of both non-classified and classified students. It is suggested that members of the PRC continue to turnkey this information to staff during grade level meetings, where both general educators and special educators are in attendance. This should be done periodically throughout the school year (before the close of the 2005-2006 school year and again at the start of the 2006-2007 school year). (5.3)

### **STANDARD 5 RECOMMENDATION**

1. Continue to do what you have been doing to get more participation from parents e.g. Family Math, Turkey Bingo. Talent Shows, etc. The school should reach out to other schools that have been successful with their PTA's. (5.1)

## **STANDARD 6 - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**The school provides research-based, results driven professional development opportunities for staff and implements performance evaluation procedures in order to improve teaching and learning.**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Staff and administrative interviews
- Review of planning documents, Teacher Professional Improvement Plans (PIPs), Annual Teacher Evaluations, Opening Day Staff Development Binder
- Grade Level meetings (GLMs) and Professional Development Session observations

## **STANDARD 6 INDICATORS**

**6.1 There is evidence of a school wide professional growth plan that supports collaboration among staff and decreases isolation and fragmentation.**

### **FINDINGS:**

There is a plan for professional development which includes components of district-based, school-based and the job-embedded opportunities which are provided through the school staff, literacy consultants, and the district RTCs.

There is a schedule for weekly formal opportunities for teachers to meet at grade level meetings as well as in professional development sessions although at times other school concerns sometimes take precedence. Special education teachers attend these meetings. There is evidence that minutes of these meetings are being taken. There are some opportunities for vertical articulation such as during district staff development days and during collaborative planning guided by the consultant. Opportunity for math vertical articulation is provided during the SLT-V math meetings.

There are opportunities at the school site to analyze student achievement data. GLMs are generally led by administrators and minutes show that these are structured as presentations of information for teachers with some discussion about these items and other concerns raised by teachers. The district and SLT V professional development opportunities for teachers in math and literacy are based on the results of the analysis of student needs as identified by Spring and Fall Writing Task Results, Novel Assessments ASK, GEPA and SPA reports. There are clearly identified opportunities at the SLT V level for teachers to address the identified areas, e.g., all math teachers meet by grade levels at the SLT office to work on math PDAs which involves analysis of student work and planning strategies for teaching to the needs identified. Teachers are strongly encouraged to pursue professional development through courses and workshops outside the school. The administration is conscious of the need to develop teacher leaders and does so by providing additional opportunities for teachers to attend specific professional development opportunities to build their knowledge and capacity. The emphasis on data is articulated by teachers. Teachers are aware that student achievement is the focus of the school.

**6.2 School-based professional development priorities are set by aligning the goals for student performance with the evidence of achievement and with the Professional Improvement Plans (PIP) of teachers and principals.**

## **FINDINGS:**

Teachers report that they are aware of general school improvement goals and their PIPs identify the connection to school improvement targets. PIPs reviewed clearly identify the connection of growth activities to common grade level professional needs but not all PIPs have areas for growth that target specific individual unique needs.

The district's assessment of administrators is aligned to the ISLLC standards. Principals receive monthly professional opportunities both through superintendent workshops and SLT V meetings. Vice-principals meet monthly both with the superintendent and the SLT V staff. These are all tied to the goals of improvement of instruction.

### **6.3 Professional development is high quality, job-embedded, frequent, tailored to teacher needs and school-based.**

## **FINDINGS:**

Professional development opportunities for teachers are varied, including on-site GLMs as well as the on-site services of coaches and RTCs. The district provides for 6 full-day and 2 ½ days for staff development in the school year calendar as well as staff development opportunities during the summer and on weekends. In addition, there are pull-out days for district and SLT workshops held to assist teachers with specific content.

It is clear that the focus of professional development has been on Goal 1 (Literacy) in the Abbott Plan. There are plans to focus the same level of attention on math as the area of focus. Other goals in the Abbott Plan are not addressed with the same attention to detail. Literacy consultants work with staff. The Office of Teaching and Learning district personnel and SLT RTCs are assigned to the school to provide assistance to teachers. Many resources are made available to teachers through the district e-boards.

In the Report on Instructional Priorities Professional Development Plan, areas for professional development are connected to student need. On the professional development plan form there are many items listed to be accomplished during each month of the school year although the connections between the goals and the skills to be addressed not reviewed regularly. Due to the number of professional development objectives, it is also not clear how the various professional forums will provide for an integrated approach to delivering the identified skill development for staff and provide the support for the implementation of new practice in classrooms.

As mentioned, there has been an emphasis on literacy. There is paper evidence of expectations that teachers implement practices presented in literacy professional development sessions. Teachers in grade level meetings discuss how they share best practice. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their practice as a part of Domain 4 on the Teacher Evaluation Report and some Teacher Observation reports reviewed show evidence of this reflective practice.

### **6.4 The school leadership uses the employee evaluation and the individual professional growth plan to connect improvements in teaching practice with individual classroom goals.**



## **FINDINGS:**

The employee evaluation form is directly connected to the four domains of teaching as identified by Charlotte Danielson. The written evaluations provided for review show that these domains are assessed. Teachers and administrators report that PIPs are written collaboratively by teachers and administrators and are directly related to student needs. PIPs reviewed identify expected results of professional growth for grade level areas in need but not for additional unique needs of a teacher. Administrators describe that there is follow-up to PIP outcomes in post-conferences and end-of-year evaluations. During GLM, teachers are asked to review their PIPs as indicated on GLM agendas.

## **STANDARD 6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Continue to utilize all resources to minimize professional development sessions cancellations. (6.1, 6.4)
2. Provide vertical meetings for departmentalized meetings for math and literacy teachers at least once a month. Continue to take minutes and include specific outcomes for decisions about instruction that are determined at meetings so that follow-up can be focused. (6.1)
3. Continue to deepen teacher understanding of expectations for PIPs that include more clearly delineated goals that identified what teacher growth will look like and a mechanism for follow-up on the effectiveness of the PIP to see if the target has been met and continue to encourage teachers to keep reflective records of their professional development activities. Continue to use the PIP chart as presented in your Opening Day Packet to help teachers write goals described on the rubric levels 3 and 4. (6.2, 6.4)
4. Review the newly created Professional Development plan to clearly identify specific targets for professional development for all Abbott Goals and create professional development action plans for these targets that identify how various professional development opportunities provide for the needed skill/content development. Continue to meet with all professional development providers (e.g. consultants, coaches, RTCs) to assess the implementation of the action plans. (6.1, 6.3, 9.3)
5. Continue to provide specific mentoring to teacher leaders who opt to take on additional professional leadership responsibilities, such as grade level chairs. (6.1)

## **DISTRICT:**

Continue to provide guidance to school leadership to deepen their understanding of action planning for professional development so that all these plans show a direct connection between student need, identified teacher practice to address this need and the professional development offered to improve the teacher practice.

**STANDARD 7 - EFFICIENCY, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES**  
**School instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, organizational direction, high performance expectations, creating a learning culture, and developing leadership capacity.**

**EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Administrator, professional staff, non-professional staff, student interviews
- Review of data analysis documents, School Leadership Committee/grade level/faculty meetings agendas and minutes, school community perception survey, professional development activities lists and staff participation data, Instructional Priorities report, sample classroom observation reports/final evaluation reports/ Professional Improvement Plans,
- Classroom visitations

**STANDARD 7 INDICATORS**

**7.1 The principal ensures all teachers have the instructional materials and the training necessary to master the CCCS.**

**FINDINGS:**

The principal, members of the SLC, and other staff members such as the literacy coach, lead science teacher, analyze multiple forms of data and use the information to select professional development and materials of instruction.

The principal has a focus of improved student academic performance as the big picture that guides her work as the chief building administrator. This is evident in the improvement profile of student accomplishment in language arts literacy.

**7.2 The principal ensures data are analyzed and disaggregated to assist teachers in adjusting their instructional practices. -**

**FINDINGS:**

The analysis of data is integral to the operation of the school and is analyzed at various levels including profiles of the total school, grade levels, sub-group populations and individual teacher/classrooms. Staff members are very aware of the global and sub-group profiles of student levels of success in reaching specific targets on standardized tests. This data has resulted in decisions to loop certain grades, change teacher placement by grade level or content area. However, there is little evidence of how this analysis of data is translated to result in generally adjusted instructional practice, e.g. differentiated instruction, small group learning, learning center. Data shows the priority area of language arts literacy has shown improvement and modification of instructional practices to better meet the needs of the student learners. There are plans to replicate that development process in all program areas of the school.

**7.3 The principal plans and allocates resources, appropriately assigns staff, monitors progress, provides organizational support, and removes barriers to sustain continuous school improvement with a commitment to equity, diversity and the learning needs of all students.**

## **FINDINGS:**

Resources, both personnel and materials, are-aligned to support the learning goals of the school. The monitoring of instruction is documented with review of lesson plans, informal classroom visits and feedback, required observation reports, annual evaluations and professional improvement plans. Due to the on-going need to strengthen the current quality level of instructional delivery in the building, recently the leadership implemented a plan designed to increase the amount of administrative time devoted to the improvement of instructional practice in classrooms.

There is evidence of staff appreciation and commitment to equity and diversity. Multicultural education is embedded in the overall school program, including the library collection, classroom libraries, instructional materials, the social studies curriculum and celebration of cultural and ethnic holidays and designated months in the calendar. There is significant evidence that the staff understands the social/emotional issues that confront many of the learner clients. These are not allowed to serve as an excuse for lesser academic accomplishment, but rather form the basis upon which the school has created a variety of support services, both instructional and human services based, to reduce the impact of these factors as a barrier to increased academic accomplishment.

The intense involvement of the administrative team, and the time they devote to addressing the student management component of their job responsibility vis-à-vis the social emotional needs of the students, reduces the negative impact these issues have on classroom instructional time and the ability of teachers to teach. It also is a major reason why there is insufficient time for the administrators to devote to direct instructional improvement services. Although this devotion adds to the positive climate, it also is a major reason why leadership found it necessary to implement a plan to increase time for the administrators to devote to direct instructional improvement services.

Staff assignments have been made and changed to better meet the learning needs of the student clients. Most (88 percent) of the teachers are highly qualified according to the N.C.L.B. standards. Where there are individuals holding provisional or alternative route certification, they are properly enrolled in programs to move to full certification. While staff members are assigned to inclusion co-teaching teams designed to best meet the learning needs of the target population, data shows the need for on-going professional development for these staff members to enhance skills of being a member of an instructional team.

There is an opportunity for grade level staff to meet and collaborate regarding instructional and social-emotional issues related to their grade levels clients -However, the opportunity for grade-level sharing is limited for the Curriculum Enhancement Specialists, who are responsible for instruction in areas such as art, music, etc. Sharing time is available during the district staff development days which is five times a year. The master scheduling is designed to address this issue. Non-instructional staff assignments are appropriately assigned to meet the health, safety and instructional needs of the students involved in that service area.

## **7.4 The principal gives highest priority to academic performance, sustaining a learning environment that promotes development of teacher leaders and efficiency of operations.**

## **FINDINGS:**

The principal implements the recommendations of the SLC as outlined in the Title I regulations. Regular conversations are held regarding academic performance and assessment results of instruction.

Demonstrated knowledge of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards by the principal is evident and its use by staff is monitored through lesson plan reviews and classroom visitations, formal and informal.

Logs are available showing both formal and informal classroom observations, as well some feedback related to what is observed. The degree to which the feedback data is delivered and used in a reflective process is less well documented.

The principal is proactive in creating and sustaining a teaching and learning environment that is generally safe, orderly, equitable, and healthy for students and staff.

The principal is proactive in creating and sustaining a teaching and learning environment that is generally safe, orderly, equitable, and healthy for students and staff. There is a question regarding the degree to which students are given opportunities to become more self directed responsible early adolescents prepared for entry to high school.

There is evidence of organizational direction in the building, and leadership roles shared with a certain selected number of staff members. Distributed leadership capacity is being developed through grade level leaders and committee chairs and administrative interns.

#### **STANDARD 7 NEXT STEP**

1. The principal and three vice-principals should develop a way to strengthen and infuse a reflective component into the informal classroom visitation and feedback process. ( 7.3)

#### **STANDARD 7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The principal and three vice principals should continue to enhance the data analysis process to ensure that the priority goals stemming from the analysis of the data are explicitly addressed by all staff during professional development, monthly staff meetings and weekly grade level meetings ( 7.1; 7.2; 8.2)
2. The administrators should continue to enhance their role as instructional leaders of the building. To do so, they must continue to find ways to reorganize their current use of time and task distribution to be able to become directly involved in the improvement and delivery of research based best instructional practices in classrooms. A collaborative instructional partnership should continue with all members of the staff, utilizing the expertise of both external consultants and appropriate in-house and district staff. (7.3)
3. The principal should continue to implement and expand time allocated for professional and non-professional staff members who work together in classrooms to develop as quality contributing members of functioning instructional teams. The plan should support both the initial start-up process of novice team members as well as continue the ongoing professional development and reflective process of being a team member. (7.3; 7.4)

## **STANDARD 8 - ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES**

**There is evidence that the school is organized to maximize use of all available resources to support high student and staff performance.**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Administrator, professional staff, non-instructional staff, and student interviews
- Review of staff/grade level agendas and minutes, teacher schedules, building walk-through observations, lesson plans, school improvement plan.
- Classroom visitations

## **STANDARD 8 INDICATORS**

**8.1 Leadership ensures that staff protects and makes efficient use of time to maximize learning and the school schedule reflects instructional priorities.**

### **FINDINGS:**

The principal and district acknowledge the need for the current teacher schedules and general building wide schedule to be modified to better protect instructional time and provide for uninterrupted mandated time for both language arts literacy and mathematics instruction. To this end, a consultant has already spent three days with school staff to gather data and build a series of options to be considered for fall, 2006. School assemblies and trips are properly related to the educational program and process of celebrating student accomplishments. Use of the public address system is carefully monitored so as not to interrupt instruction.

**8.2 School leadership promotes staff/team planning vertically and horizontally across content areas and grades that is focused on the goals, objectives and strategies in the report on instructional priorities (e.g., common planning time for content area teachers; emphasis on time on task and integrated units).**

### **FINDINGS**

The current organizational pattern provides for weekly grade level content area meetings and professional development meetings. Planning time is provided for curriculum Enhancement Specialists during district staff development days and during resource time provided in schedules each week. The degree to which teachers use the common planning time to share lesson plans, successful teaching strategies, materials that are especially pertinent to specific lessons, varies greatly.

## **STANDARD 8 NEXT STEP**

1. The school should continue to work with the outside scheduling consultant, and provide staff the opportunity to give maximum input to the process. (8.1; 8.2)

## **STANDARD 8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The principal should provide the staff with the opportunity to clarify all questions regarding the schedule options developed by in-house scheduling committee and consider staff choice according to school/program needs. (8.1; 8.2)

2. Planning time should continue to be systematically used to develop cross- disciplinary learning activities that reinforce the core curriculum standards and special subject areas into the core academic subject areas as appropriate. (8.2)
3. Provide support for the new bilingual staff to ensure appropriate content instruction for ELLs. (8.2)
4. Provide support for the new bilingual staff to ensure appropriate content instruction for ELLs. (8.2)

### **STANDARD 9: COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE PLANNING**

**School leadership and the SLC or NCLB planning committee communicates a clear purpose, direction and strategies focused on teaching and learning through the development, implementation and evaluation of the following: vision, goals, NCLB school improvement plan and report on instructional priorities for Abbott schools.**

#### **EVIDENCE FOR THESE INDICATORS BASED ON:**

- Administrator, teacher and non-instructional staff, SLC, PTA, and parents' interviews
- Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities, and district and school's vision/mission statements
- School and community perception survey and teacher's review of instruction and learning survey, SLC agenda and meetings, Grade level planning minutes, Classroom visitations

### **STANDARD 9 INDICATORS**

**9.1 There is evidence that the school community embraces and collaborates in the development of the school's the vision and goals.**

#### **FINDINGS:**

The district and school have clear articulated vision and mission statements. In addition, the principal's statement emphasizes the total needs of all students. The school's motto, "Do your Best! Let Camden Technology Middle School Do The Rest! All Children Will Learn" is displayed in various locations throughout the building, and is intentionally acknowledged and publicly recited by the principal every morning over the public address system. The school has the designation of being a community and technology school. Most members of the staff can communicate the school's vision and goals. The school leadership receives input from school staff members. Community stakeholders are invited to provide input to develop the school's revised vision and goals.

**9.2 There is evidence that the School Leadership Council (SLC) or NCLB Planning Committee analyze multiple forms of data to update the comprehensive needs assessment and to develop the Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities or the NCLB School Improvement Plan.**

#### **FINDINGS:**

The SLC is the main clearinghouse for collecting and analyzing various data to some extent to develop the Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities or the NCLB School Improvement Plan. The SLC meets regularly to discuss issues related to the school's overall performance that influence students' achievement (i.e. language arts literacy and mathematics assessments, disciplinary problems, and

parental/community involvement). A sufficient variety of current electronic and printed instructional resources are utilized. There is however, little evidence that a formal systematic process allows for informed decision-making and capacity building of SLC members. While instructional staff on the SLC is able to translate the details of the current instructional priorities, others exhibit varying degrees of knowledge about the goals and objectives of the plan. During the interview with members of the SLC, it was suggested by the leadership that some SLC members need continuous on-going professional development and training in data analysis. Team also suggests that the SLC members review the revised SLC governance regulations cited in the New Jersey Department of Education Administrative Code.

### **9.3 Strategies in the Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities or NCLB School Improvement Plan are aligned with the school's vision and student and school goals.**

#### **FINDINGS:**

Strategies in the Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities include an intentional focus on student achievement (i.e. goal 1 – literacy, goal 2- mathematics, goal 3 – specialized populations, goal 4- science) but the plans for these strategies are unevenly developed across the goals areas. Strategies in the Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities were distributed and reviewed with staff. Most of the instructional and non-instructional staff members are aware that there are strategies outlined in the plan. School leadership systematically conducts formal and informal walkthroughs and utilizes a systematic data driven process to monitor (i.e. lesson plans, memos, professional improvement plan) the effectiveness of instructional practices.

#### **STANDARD 9 NEXT STEP**

1. The school leadership should continue to be role models, and consistently articulate a shared mission, vision, values and goals throughout the school community that focus on student learning and achievement through a collaborative process (9.1)

#### **STANDARD 9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The district should continue to provide in-service training to SLC members in data analysis and for the enhancement of governance practices that are outlined in the Administrative Code of the New Jersey State Department of Education. (9.2)
2. The school leadership should continue to work toward creating create a master schedule to provide time for all instructional staff the opportunity to have direct and collegial dialogue during grade level meetings in a systematic process to ensure effective implementation of the strategies in the Abbott Instructions on Priorities. (9.3)
3. In order to optimize the full implementation of the school's Abbott Report on Instructional Priorities, it is critical that school leadership continue to invest the time, training, and resources necessary to involve all staff in the decision-making processes in reframing a successful, sustainable learning organization. Efforts made by the district and school leadership should be intentionally realized through encouraging autonomy and participation, fostering cooperative teamwork, and utilize all staff as valuable resources. (9.1, 9.2, 9.3)

## **IN CONCLUSION**

Members of the CAPA review team express their appreciation to the staff and community of Camden Middle Technology School for their welcome and for their interaction with us during our visit. We encourage the school community to review this report in depth, asking themselves deep reflective questions about the findings of fact and recommendations for action.

We also encourage school leadership to lead long-term reflections on the following:

1. What processes must be put into place to assist the staff in moving further away from teacher directed, whole class instruction, to other models of research based best practices of differentiated instruction, more suitable for meeting the needs of all student learners?
2. How can the professional growth and strength of the staff that resulted in the improved academic accomplishment of the student body in the area of Language Arts Literacy be applied to other areas of the instructional program?
3. How can the school take ownership of the results of the CAPA review to lead the school to a level of proficiency and better, in all areas of instruction, and for all of the student clients?



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

District	Newark Public School District
School	Camden Middle Technology School
Principal Name – Years in Building	Dr. Josephine McDowell, 9 years
Grade Levels	5-8
Number of Teachers meeting NCLB HQT	59
Number of Teachers with Emergency Certification	1.8% (2004)
Total Number of Classrooms	54
Percent Special Education	25%
Number – Self Contained Classrooms	8
Number of Inclusive Classrooms	4
Percent Bilingual	6%
Number of Bilingual Classrooms	1
Number of Students	498
School Leadership Council (SLC) or Title I Planning Committee (PC) Meets Monthly	yes
SLC or Title I PC has complete representation	yes
Percent Parent Involvement	10% (sporadic)
Abbott only - Status of WSR Contract	District Model
Persistently Dangerous “Warning”	no
AYP Indicators Missed (specify)	Total Population, Special Education, English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged
AYP Content Areas Missed	GEPA Mathematics
Language Arts Program/Textbook	Harcourt Trophies, McDougall Littell
Mathematics Program/Textbook	Everyday Math, Connected math
Number of Students Offered Choice Option in 2005-2006	
Number of Students Receiving Supplemental Services in 2004-2005	2004-46 2005 – 83 registered